REMARKS

The Applicant has received and reviewed the Final Official Action mailed by the Office on 5 July 2005 (hereinafter, the "Final Action"), and submits the paper as a fully-responsive reply thereto. The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections lodged against the subject application. Claims 1-5, 7-10, 13-17, and 21-23 are pending in the application.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

As stated on page 2 of the Final Action, Claims 1-5, 7-10, 13-17, and 21-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over a publication titled, "LASS: Putting the telephone customer in charge", by C. Brant Hirschman, Grant E. Swinehart, and Marie L. Todd, dated May 1985 (hereinafter, "Hirschman"), in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,436,957 to McConnell (hereinafter, "McConnell"), and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,206,900 to Callele (hereinafter, "Callele"). The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Turning to **independent claim 1**, without conceding the propriety of the stated rejections, and solely to advance the prosecution of this application, the Applicant has amended claim 1 to clarify further features of the method.

Claim 1 defines a method for blocking future calls from the caller to the callee, and recites (with redlines included):

"connecting a call from the caller to the callee;

receiving a first instruction from the callee to access a service to block future calls from the caller to the callee;

providing at least one callee selection via a voice prompt responsive to the first instruction;

receiving a second instruction from the callee;

identifying a first telephone number associated with the caller;

storing the first telephone number associated with the caller in a caller block table in a service data point (SDP); and

preventing, via a service switching point (SSP), one or more phone calls from the first telephone number from being forwarded to a second telephone number associated with the callee; and

playing a callee-selected message back to the caller when the caller attempts to call the callee."

The Applicant submits that the above revisions are fully supported under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 1st paragraph, at least by page 11, lines 20-23 of the Specification.

The combination of Hirschman, McConnell, and Callele fails to teach or suggest the recited method. The Applicant agrees with the assessment on Page 4 of the Final Action that Hirschman does not teach providing at least one callee selection via a voice prompt responsive to the first instruction, and receiving a second instruction from the callee. In addition, however, the Applicant submits that Hirschman neither teaches nor suggests "playing a callee-selected message back to the caller when the caller attempts to call the callee", as recited in claim 1.

Turning to Callele, the Final Action cited column 4, lines 13-16 and 22-24 of Callele for the teaching missing from Hirschman. Without conceding that Callele provides the teaching for which it was cited, the Applicant submits that this portion of Callele does not provide the teaching missing from Hirschman necessary to support a § 103 rejection of claim 1. More particularly, the Applicant submits that Callele does not teach or suggest at least "playing a callee-selected message back to the caller when the caller attempts to call the callee," as recited in claim 1.

Turning to McConnell, the Final Action cited for certain features pertaining to the AIN, SDP, and SSP, and without conceding that McConnell provides the teaching for which it is cited,

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PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

PAGE 14/17 * RCVD AT 11/4/2005 4:47:30 PM [Eastern Standard Time] * SVR:USPTO-EFXRF-6/29 * DNIS:2738300 * CSID:15093238979 * DURATION (mm-ss):04-20

the Applicant submits that McConnell neither teaches nor suggests "playing a callee-selected message back to the caller when the caller attempts to call the callee," as recited in claim 1.

Based at least on the foregoing, the Applicant submits that Hirschman, Callele, and McConnell, whether considered severally or in combination, do not support a § 103 rejection of claim 1. Accordingly, the Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the stated § 103 rejection of claim 1.

Claims 2-5 and 7-10 depend from claim 1, and by virtue of this dependency, the above comments directed to claim 1 apply equally to claims 2-5 and 7-10. Additionally, these claims recite features that, when taken together with those of claim 1, define methods not taught or suggested by the Hirschman/McConnell/Callele combination.

Regarding claim 9 in particular, the Applicant has amended it to clarify further features of the method. For convenience, claim 9 is reproduced below, with redlines included:

"9.   (Currently Amended) The method as in claim 7, wherein prompting the callee includes prompting the callee to select a pre-recorded message to be played to the caller when the caller is blocked from placing a call to the callee, and further comprising enabling the caller to record the message in the caller's own voice."

The Applicant submits that the above revisions are supported at least by page 11, lines 5-10 of the Specification, which references block 62 in Figure 2.

In addition to the comments directed above to claim 1, from which claim 9 ultimately depends, the Applicant submits that Hirschman, Callele, and/or McConnell, whether considered severally or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the features recited in claim 9. Based at least on this additional basis, the Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103 rejection of claim 9.

Turning to **independent claim 13**, this claim is amended to clarify features similarly to claim 1, and hence benefits from the argument directed above to claim 1. The Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the § 103 rejection of claim 13.

Claims 14-17 depend from claim 13 and hence benefit from the argument directed above to claim 1. Additionally, these claims recite features that, when taken together with those of claim 13, define telecommunications systems not taught or suggested by the Hirschman/McConnell/Callcle combination.

Turning to **independent claim 21**, without conceding the propriety of the stated § 103 rejection, the Applicant has amended claim 21 as indicated above to clarify further features of the method. For convenience, part of claim 21 is reproduced here, with redlines included:

"enabling the user to manually identifying a first telephone number associated with the caller;"

The Applicant submits that the specification supports the foregoing revisions at least in the paragraph bridging pages 12 and 13.

The Applicant further submits that Hirschman, Callcle, and/or Callele, whether considered severally or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the features recited in claim 21. More particularly, Hirschman, Callele, and/or Callele neither teach nor suggest "enabling the user to manually identify a first telephone number associated with the caller;", as recited in claim 21.

Based at least one the foregoing, the Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the § 103 rejection of claim 21.

Claims **22-23** depend from claim 21 and hence benefit from the argument directed above to claim 21. Additionally, these claims recite features that, when taken together with those of

claim 21, define methods not taught or suggested by the Hirschman/McConnell/Callele combination.

Conclusion

The Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of claims 1-5, 7-10, 13-17, and 21-23, and respectfully requests favorable action on the subject application. If any issue remains unresolved that would prevent allowance of this case, <u>the Office is requested to contact the undersigned attorney to resolve the issue</u>.

Respectfully submitted,

By: _____
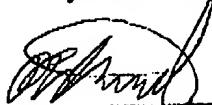
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